

# Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plan (IP) Fact Sheet Piankatank, Gwynn's Island and Milford Haven Watersheds in the Counties of Mathews, Middlesex and Gloucester

**What is a TMDL?** Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is a term used to describe the amount of a pollutant that a stream can receive and still meet water quality standards. A TMDL study identifies sources of pollution and reductions needed to attain standards. A TMDL study considers both **point sources**, such as residential, municipal or industrial discharges, and **nonpoint sources**, such as residential, urban, forestry or agricultural activities. Additional information on Virginia's TMDL program can be found at <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/WaterQualityInformationTMDLs.aspx>

**Why were TMDLs prepared for the Piankatank, Gwynns Island and Milford Haven Watersheds?** The goal of the Clean Water Act is that all streams should be suitable for recreational uses, including swimming and fishing. **Fecal Coliform** bacteria are used to indicate the presence of pathogens in streams and to determine support of the shellfish use standard. To maintain the use of a waterbody for direct shellfish harvesting, the goal is to ensure the concentration of fecal coliforms entering the waterbody does not exceed a "safe" level. The safe level is set as the standard against which water quality monitoring samples are checked. Portions of **Wilton and Healy Creeks** ( Middlesex Co.), **Cobbs Creek** (Mathews Co.), **Upper Piankatank River** (Middlesex and Gloucester Co.), **Harper Creek** (Gloucester Co.), and **Queens, Stutts, Morris, Billups and Edwards Creeks** (Mathews Co.) do not support the shellfish use standard.

**What portions of the Piankatank, Gwynns Island and Milford Haven watersheds are addressed in the TMDL studies?** The drainage area of the Lower Piankatank River watershed is approximately **11.9 square miles** and includes Wilton, Healy and Cobbs Creeks. The drainage area of the Upper Piankatank River watershed is approximately **65 square miles** and includes portions of the upper Piankatank River and Harper Creek. The drainage areas for Gwynns Island and Milford Haven are **2.3 square miles** and **18.7 square miles**, respectively, with sub-watershed acreages as follows: Edwards Creek – 1497 Acres; Queens Creek – 2528 Acres; Stutts Creek – 958 acres; Morris Creek – 517 Acres; and Billups Creek – 4221 acres. The TMDL studies and maps can be viewed at <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/portals/0/DEQ/Water/TMDL/apptmdls/shellfish/pianka.pdf> <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/portals/0/DEQ/Water/TMDL/apptmdls/shellfish/pianharp.pdf> <http://www.deq.virginia.gov/portals/0/DEQ/Water/TMDL/apptmdls/shellfish/gwynnisl.pdf>

**What happens now that the TMDLs have been completed?** EPA approved the Bacteria TMDLs for Gwynns Island and Milford Haven on January 15, 2008. The Piankatank River and Harper's Creek TMDL was approved on June 7, 2006. The Piankatank River (Lower) TMDL was approved on November 15, 2005 and then modified on June 21, 2009.

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After approval, a **TMDL implementation plan (IP)** is developed to identify the corrective actions needed to meet the TMDL water quality goal. IPs must include a schedule of actions and their respective costs and benefits, measurable goals, a monitoring plan, and a target date for achieving compliance with water quality standards. Development of the IP begins in April 2012 and is anticipated to be complete in approximately 9 months.

**How will the TMDL be implemented?** Nonpoint source TMDLs are implemented through **best management practices** (BMPs) that will reduce the amount of the pollutant loadings identified in the TMDL. Implementation will occur in stages and local, state, and federal agencies and other organizations will assist landowners and other citizens in facilitating the actual implementation of BMPs. Progress will be monitored during the implementation phase through the tracking of practices installed and water quality monitoring.

**How will the public participate in TMDL IP development?** Two formal public meetings are planned as part of the TMDL IP development process. The **first public meeting** will be held **May 23, 2012** to inform the public about the impairments, implementation plan development process, and to obtain public comment. It will be followed by **working group sessions** the same evening to better understand the concerns of various stakeholder groups. Other working group sessions are planned while developing the IP. The second public meeting will be held in late fall 2012 to present a draft IP.

**What are the expected benefits of the TMDL and Implementation efforts?** Implementation of the bacteria TMDL will work towards restoring the beneficial uses of these creeks so they support commercial shellfish harvesting. Implementation of the bacteria TMDL will work towards restoring the beneficial use of these waterways, making it possible for individuals to commercially harvest shellfish. In addition to improved shellfish harvesting, the installation of certain BMPs may result in improved riparian habitat, property values and safer recreation.

**What funding will be available to help support the stakeholders' efforts in implementing the TMDLs?** The Water Quality Improvement Fund may be a possible funding source for best management practices that address bacteria. Other sources of funding, such as the Virginia Revolving Loan Funds and various federal grant programs that can be utilized to fund corrective actions, will be identified in the TMDL IP. The Virginia TMDL IP Guidance Manual includes additional information on funding sources. Information on DEQ and DCR programs, including information on TMDLs, may be found at [www.deq.virginia.gov](http://www.deq.virginia.gov) and [www.dcr.virginia.gov](http://www.dcr.virginia.gov)

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**Whom may I contact to participate in, comment on or learn more about the  
Piankatank, Gwynns Island and Milford Haven watersheds TMDL IP development?**

May Louise Sligh, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, P.O. Box 1425,  
Tappahannock, VA 22560, telephone (804) 443-1494/e-mail [may.sligh@dcr.virginia.gov](mailto:may.sligh@dcr.virginia.gov).

The first set of **public meetings** is scheduled for **Thursday, May 23, 2012 from 6:30-8:30,  
at the Middlesex Family YMCA, 11487 General Puller Highway in Hartfield, Virginia.**

Agricultural, residential, recreational and business (watermen, etc) stakeholder working  
groups will also meet during that time. These meetings will help to ensure that the  
information used in the IP is accurate and that the final IP reflects the concerns/issues of  
the watershed stakeholders. The 30-day public comment period on the information presented at  
these meetings will end on **June 23, 2012**. All public meetings will be advertised in local  
newspapers, through direct mailings (e-mail), and in the Virginia Register.